

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5056

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 6678

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, SHUM

SUBJECT: COMMITTEE FOR PEACE ANALYSIS OF RECENT POLITICAL/SECURITY
DETENTIONS

REF: SANTIAGO 6499

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO COMMITTEE FOR PEACE DOCUMENTS, RATE OF
POLITICAL DETENTIONS IN SANTIAGO HAD BEEN DECREASING UNTIL
AUGUST-SEPTEMBER. DOCUMENTS CONTAIN STATEMENTS WHICH ALLEGE
CONTINUING GOC USE OF TORTURE, AND CHARGES THAT SEVERAL PERSONS
HAVE RECENTLY DIED WHILE PRESUMABLY DETAINED. COMMITTEE BELIEVES
TOTAL NUMBER OF POLITICAL DETAINEES AS OF AUGUST 13, 1975, WAS
APPROXIMATELY 5,500. (THIS INCLUDES 924 "DISAPPEARED") WHILE ADMITTIN
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POSSIBILITY OF SUBSTANTIAL ERROR. ANOTHER CHURCH SOURCE EMPHASIZES
THAT THREAT OF LOCAL TERRORISM REMAINS REAL. END SUMMARY.

2. CHURCH-SPONSORED COMMITTEE FOR PEACE IS BEST SOURCE OF
CURRENT STATISTICS ON DETENTIONS IN SANTIAGO AREA. ITS INFORMATION
IS DRAWN MAINLY FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF DETAINEES, OR FROM
RELEASED DETAINEES THEMSELVES, WHO GO TO COMMITTEE AS BEST KNOWN
CENTER FOR ASSISTANCE AND INFORMATION. COMMITTEE KNOWS THEY MAY
RECEIVE SOME FALSE INFORMATION, AND THAT STATISTICS MAY NOT BE
COMPLETE. COMMITTEE LEADERS TRY TO KEEP STATISTICS OBJECTIVE AND
TO SCREEN CAREFULLY INFORMATION COMING TO THEM.

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3. ACCORDING TO COMMITTEE, FOLLOWING NUMBER OF PERSONS WERE DETAINED FOR POLITICAL REASONS IN SANTIAGO DURING PAST FEW MONTHS: MAY-94, JUNE-76, JULY-60, AUGUST-112, SEPTEMBER-124 (AS OF SEPTEMBER 25). INCREASE IN AUGUST PRESUMABLY WAS RESULT OF UNIVERSITY DETENTIONS (SEPTELS). IN SEPTEMBER, GOC SECURITY FORCES APPARENTLY TOOK PREVENTIVE ACTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR SEPTEMBER 11 AND SEPTEMBER 18 CELEBRATIONS, RESULTING IN AN INCREASE IN RATE OF DETENTIONS. EMBASSY HAS REPORTED SEPARATELY (SANTIAGO 6158) AND A FEW TERRORIST ATTEMPTS AT THAT TIME.

4. DOCUMENTS CITE ALLEGATIONS OF RECENT TORTURE OF DETAINEES. PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE, INCLUDING USE OF ELECTRIC SHOCK, ARE MENTIONED. DOCUMENTS ALSO CITE INFORMATION WHICH SUGGESTS FIVE PERSONS DIED RECENTLY WHILE IN THE HANDS OF GOC SECURITY FORCES, ALTHOUGH EVIDENCE IS INCONCLUSIVE.

5. LATEST COMMITTEE ESTIMATE GIVEN TO EMBASSY CONCERNING TOTAL NUMBER OF POLITICAL DETAINEES IS DATED AUGUST 13. COMMITTEE TAKES GOC JULY 15 FIGURE OF 4,566 (REF TEL AND ADDS 924 CASES OF DISAPPEARANCE REGISTERED WITH COMMITTEE, FOR TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 5,500 DETAINEES. ANALYSIS ADMITS IMPOSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING EXACT FIGURE, AND ACKNOWLEDGES POSSIBILITY OF SUBSTANTIAL ERROR. EMBASSY NOTES THAT ICRC BELIEVES TOTAL FIGURE OF ABOUT THOUSAND DISAPPEARED PERSONS QUESTIONABLE; THEY HAVE REFINED LIST TO ABOUT HALF THAT.

6. ALTHOUGH CHURCH DEPLORES DETENTIONS ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, IT ALSO RECOGNIZES THAT A SECURITY THREAT TO GOC STILL EXISTS. ONE BISHOP CLOSE TO CARDINAL TOLD EMBASSY THAT HE HAD RECENTLY PASSED INFORMATION TO GOC SECURITY FORCES CONCERNING ALLEGED EXPLOSIVE CACHE. RESULT WAS ARREST OF SEVERAL PERSONS ("REAL NUTS") AND DISCOVERY OF 42 KILOGRAMS OF PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES. BISHOP ALSO OPINED THAT HUNDRED OR SO DETENTIONS A MONTH IN SANTIAGO AREA DOES NOT APPEAR UNREASONABLE IN PRESENT CONDITIONS, ALTHOUGH HE HAS PROBLEMS WITH METHODS USED.

7. COMMENT: COMMITTEE DETAINEE FIGURES ARE PROBABLY THE MOST COMPLETE AVAILABLE OUTSIDE OF GOC, EVEN THOUGH THERE IS A MARGIN OF ERROR. FIGURES SHOW THAT RATE OF DETENTIONS DID, IN FACT, BEGIN TO DECREASE AFTER NEW NATIONAL SECURITY LAW WAS ISSUED IN MAY AND SECURITY FORCES WERE GIVEN STRICTER ORDERS ON DETENTION POLICY. CONFIDENTIAL

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AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER UPSWING IS APPARENT RESULT OF UNIVERSITY ARRESTS AND SEPTEMBER PRECAUTIONARY DETENTIONS, AND NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENTATIVE OF A LONG-TERM TREND. POPPER

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